

THE NORFOLK SMALL HOLDINGS: Hints for Soldiers' Settlements.

COUNTRY LIFE

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COUNTRY LIFE

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EDITORIAL NOTICE

The Editor would be glad to consider any MSS., photographs or sketches submitted to him; but they should be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes for return if unsuitable. In case of loss or injury he cannot hold himself responsible for MSS., photographs or sketches, and publication in COUNTRY LIFE can only be taken as evidence of acceptance. The name and address of the owner should be placed on the back of all pictures and MSS.

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The War Office notifies that all papers posted to any neutral European country will be stopped, except those sent by publishers and newsgatherers who have obtained special permission from the War Office. Such permission has been granted to COUNTRY LIFE, and subscribers who send to friends in Denmark, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, neutral countries in America, and the Dependencies of neutral European countries in Africa should order copies to be despatched by the Publisher from 20, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVESTOCK

PEOPLE interested in livestock have waited patiently for a report of the scheme brought into operation just before the war. It was started with a considerable amount of energy in the days when Mr. Lloyd George was directing all his enthusiasm to agricultural reconstruction. Several excellent men were called together to serve under the Board, one of the most practical being Mr. Webb, who for many years before had been land agent at Babraham. He is a thoroughly practical man on stock, as becomes the son of Mr. Jonas Webb: yet we mention his name only because, as our readers know, he was connected with this journal. His concern was mostly with cattle, but the other departments of livestock promised to be looked after equally well. A report has now been issued, but it would be unfair to expect a great deal of progress to have been made during the period in review. Changes in livestock cannot be produced as easily as changes in crops.

A herd of dairy cattle, for instance, must be built piece by piece of animals that have distinguished themselves at the milking pail. Not only the dam, but the sire also must come from a good milking strain, and though this is well known to owners of pedigree stock, it was not so much acted upon by the ordinary herdsmen and dairy farmers in the country. The latter adhered to the old-fashioned plan of buying their cattle by eye in the nearest market, using them for a season or two and then sending them back to where they came from.

To counteract this carelessness the Board of Agriculture has first of all encouraged the keeping of correct dairy records. The yield of every cow in a herd should be put down in black and white after each time of milking. There can be no doubt that a gratifying amount of success has been achieved in getting farmers to do this. Far more milk records are kept now than were ever kept before, and yet these are not sufficient. The Board of Agriculture made an excellent plan by which a non-pedigree cow could be admitted to a herd-book if a good milker. Marked improvement followed. This measure and its effects were discussed in an article on Miss Coats' milking herd which our readers may remember. No doubt this brought home to the mind of the dairyman the great advantage of securing a good bull, and in the report before us it is stated that, whereas societies and individual owners under the Board of Agriculture scheme used to hesitate to give more than £30 for a sire, many are now willing to invest from £60 to £100. "The visits paid by prospective purchasers to private pedigree herd and public sales of such animals have afforded valuable object lessons in the value of scientific breeding and rearing, and have encouraged the acquisition not only of pedigree sires but of registered female animals as well. Many members, too, are keeping careful records of the crosses by pure-bred sires so that the progeny in years to come may be eligible for entry in the Herd Book of its breed. This, again, is a true index of the educational value of the Scheme." It is noted that owners are more discriminating about their animals. Those who obtain heifer calves sired by subsidised bulls rarely part with them; but if they wish to sell, purchasers are easily found. The best of the bull calves, too, are also retained for use as sires, and those sold for rearing make good prices. Even in war-time progress can be reported. The number of bulls located at the close of the year 1917-18 was 710 as compared with 659 in 1916-17. Of these, 696 were provided by 578 societies, and the remainder by 14 individuals; 528 were located in England and 182 in Wales. The number of bulls actually purchased and owned by societies was 69, the other 627 being hired by societies from the owners.

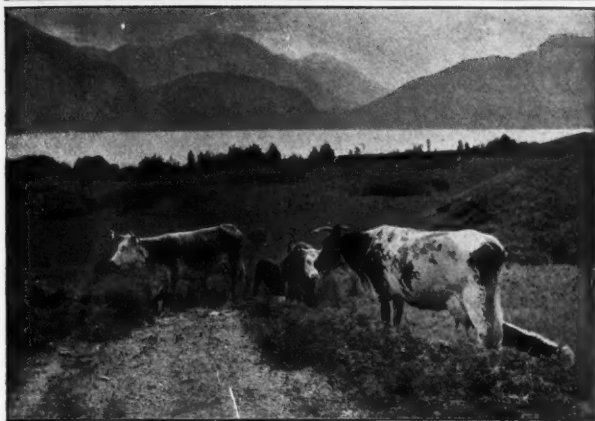
Boars also came under the Scheme, but it is said that there are considerable difficulties experienced in forming boar societies. The £3 grant made in respect of a boar is not enough to tempt farmers to buy really first-rate sires. Nevertheless, 264 boars were subsidised and placed out in 1917-18, as compared with 216 in 1916-17. It may be interesting to note that of these, 110 were Large White, 76 were Large Black, 20 Gloucester Old Spots, 10 Berkshire, 17 Lincoln Curly Coat, 15 Middle White, 13 Cumberland, and 3 Large White Ulster. The average price was £9 6s. 8d. per boar, and the highest sum paid was £29 8s. for a Gloucester Old Spot. The service fee varied from 2s. to 7s. 6d. This is interesting as showing the breeds most in favour. The Large White evidently hold first place in the affections of the pig keepers, but the Gloucester Old Spots are making excellent produce. The working of the livestock scheme was more complicated in its application to the breeding of heavy horses; yet very good progress has been made. Several of the societies formed four years ago started with one stallion and now arrange to travel two, three, or even four. Of course, the report is a good one if one considers that the operations it deals with have been done in war-time. Farmers will welcome the announcement that in spite of war troubles the scheme is to be continued.

Our Frontispiece

WE print as our frontispiece to this week's issue a portrait of Miss Audrey Fenwick, whose marriage to Captain Wilfrid Holland-Hibbert is to take place on September 25th. Miss Fenwick is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Fenwick of Abbotswood, Gloucestershire.

. It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens or lives'ock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper.

COUNTRY



NOTES

EVIDENTLY the war is now reaching a new and, what may prove to be, its most serious stage. Until last week-end the Germans could only vaunt their skill in outwitting the pursuit of the Allies. They were moving back, in their oft repeated phrase, "according to plan," and in Sunday's despatches it was announced in their official communiqué that "We have reached our new positions." From other sources of information we heard that their resistance was stiffening, as, indeed, was bound to be the case. It looks as though Ludendorff had made up his mind to risk everything in an attempt to hold the old Hindenburg line. Meanwhile, as far as we can gather from newspaper comment and reports of interviews with eminent persons, including the Crown Prince, the whole population is smitten with a nervous distrust. Not all the falsification in the world can entirely hide the fact that not only was the German offensive thrown back, but it was readily succeeded by a counter offensive which has already lasted longer and achieved more successes than any other move in the history of the war.

IN considering the facts and observations set down in the articles on "Small-holdings in Norfolk," of which the first is printed in this issue, the reader should remember that it is not part of the argument to attempt to prove that every County Council has done or even can do the same as Norfolk. First there is the soil, the like of which only occurs here and there throughout the country. The small-holder may earn a comfortable living from a few acres of rich soil where he would not be able to live on an area three or four times as large if the soil were light. Further, all the counties are not as sympathetic to the small-holding movement as Norfolk, and, in consequence, great pains have not been taken to place the people advantageously on the land. There has often been unnecessary expenditure where it would have been easy to be economical. The purpose of the series of articles of which this is the beginning is rather to show what a County Council can do if properly directed, and also, of course, what soils would yield a living wage to any man should he cultivate ten acres or more. Soils like this occur in various parts of the country, and it would be good policy to settle the soldiers on them wherever possible, as they would have the best opportunities of making a decent livelihood.

WE recently had an opportunity of talking with an officer who, after nearly five months' imprisonment in Germany, managed to escape and get safely back to this country. He is a quiet, level-headed man, and would be the last to exaggerate the plight of the enemy, but he says that it is extremely serious. The people are forced to wear paper clothes and are deprived of fat, they have to use dried berries and acorns as substitutes for coffee beans, and worse. But he says the main trades are at a complete standstill for the want of raw material and are not in a position to rise above the depression which a series of defeats must inevitably cause. As far as his observation went, our informant was of opinion that the German people are losing heart. He did not see any outward sign of rebellion against the Kaiser and his military advisers, but the falling off in enthusiasm and zeal was very marked. He did not minimise a certain toughness

which is part of the national character and is sure that there is a considerable number of people who are ready to face further effort and further suffering; but beside them is a tottering mass of whom nothing certain can be predicted, except that in their condition a little more alarm might lead almost to anything. It depends upon the extent to which Marshal Foch has turned his versatile mind in the direction of producing discomfort in the new positions taken up by the enemy.

IN an interesting review of Germany's food problem in the *Nineteenth Century* the Rev. J. A. F. Ozanne, who is a captain in the R.G.A., does his best to get at the truth of the food situation in Germany, and prints a table of the average rations in German towns side by side with a table of rations in this country. So we see that in place of our own 16oz. of meat a week, which, by the way, does not take into account bacon and ham, the German citizen gets about 7oz. Against our butter ration he gets 1.5oz., and slightly under 6oz. of sugar. A ration card, however, is a poor substitute for food. Captain Ozanne believes he is justified in asserting that the food cards in 90 per cent. of the German towns are of no more value than worthless cheques; in other words, a ration allowance of 7oz. is not so much a guarantee of 7oz. of meat as an assurance that in no circumstances will he get more. He will, thinks Captain Ozanne, be lucky if he gets 4oz. So there has grown up lately a new and flourishing industry in the manufacture of bogus bread tickets, and we learn that in Bielefeld no fewer than three bread ticket factories were discovered, and each of these was producing thousands of tickets a day. Serious as the situation undoubtedly is in Germany, it will be idle and, indeed, foolish to build hopes of collapse upon it. Discipline counts for much, and its triumph in Germany is seen in the unquestioned solidarity that exists there to-day.

NIGHT PIECE.

(Near Cromer.)

The evening winds as they cross and meet
Comb out the tawny locks of the wheat,
And smooth out the creases with their caresses
Of the barley's flaxen hair.

And the burning wain of the sun in the west
As he homeward drives to his well earned rest,
Carries off his last load of ruddy sheaves
And leaves heaven's stubbles bare.

Then the moon puts in her sickle and reaps
Her harvest of stars that she lays in heaps
O'er the unfenced fields of the sea, sallow swaths
Of light o'er its dark green layer.

And a hundred leagues away the guns
Neath a false aurora of bursting suns
And whirling comets and shooting stars
Make their grim harvest there.

CLOUDESLEY BRERETON.

A LETTER addressed to the Press by Lord Desborough will do much to help the cultivator of land to understand what has been done in regard to his claim for the right of appeal. He will be sure of this right even when a notice is issued over the signature of "Dora" unless it is a simple intimation that the land shall be cultivated under the rules of good husbandry. Here no appeal is allowed unless the notice is one determining tenancy. Should the Board of Agriculture or their agents decide to enter a holding without determining the tenancy a notice will be served and a right of appeal granted before the Board can take possession. But if the land be required for gardens or allotments, or possession is taken solely to secure good cultivation, no notice will be served and no appeal will be allowed. When an order for appeal is given owner and occupier will have the same rights of appeal. Compensation can be claimed where any loss has been suffered by the carrying out of orders of the Board of Agriculture or their agents, and in default of agreement these will be assessed by an independent arbitrator instead of by the Defence of the Realm Losses Commission. The farmer would be very wise to get a copy of the Act and study it clause by clause.

THE coal shortage is more serious than ever the food shortage has been. So we are officially informed. That we should be short of food surprised nobody, for from our youth up we had learnt of the dependence of Britain upon oversea

sources of supply and had been harrowed—though with a tinge of pleased excitement—at knowing for how many days these islands could stand a siege. But a shortage of coal is a vastly different matter. Not only is coal the greatest of our natural resources, but it is the most vital and elementary raw material for the carrying on of the war in almost every department. How comes it, then, that with all the advantages we possess of rich seams, machinery and transport to hand, a shortage of coal has become even possible, let alone a present fact? There is only one answer. At the behest of a few noisy voices the “comb out” of miners has been carried beyond the safety mark, with the result that a comparatively small number of recruits is to be paid for by this menace to our whole efficiency. It is difficult to believe that with the Allied resources at their present strength and waxing at that, it can be necessary to retain in the Army the miners whose work in the pits is so urgently needed. Let it be admitted, then, that there has been a mistake and and let us see that the mischief is mended.

APPARENTLY it will be possible to indulge in the luxury of travelling during the coming winter at considerable inconvenience. Long distance trains are to be reduced in number, economy practised by abolishing fires in waiting-rooms and reducing light. It would be a pity if this interference led to a serious curtailment of travelling facilities for those persons who only go out on serious business. But it must be admitted that the crowded trains of this summer have not looked as though they were only accommodating passengers who had a serious purpose in view. Even along the East Coast, where the fear of aircraft prevails to a greater extent than in any other part of the country, the passenger trains have borne a close resemblance to cattle trucks, so closely have the travellers been packed together in them. We have seen every seat in every compartment of a comparatively fast train occupied, the standing room in the carriages fully taken up, and even the corridors filled with those who could secure a footing in them. A certain proportion are soldiers, with whose travelling no fault can be found. They do not get leave very often, and it would be unfair to complain if they use the railways. There are many people who in these times have important business to attend to far from home, but after these deductions are made there remains, we are sure, a majority who are merely joy riding on the flimsiest of excuses, and if by legislation or otherwise they can be induced to stay at home nothing but good must follow.

IN the current number of the Journal of the Board of Agriculture there is an interesting note of a successful effort at food production made in Lancashire. It followed as a result of the action of the Wigan and District Executive Committee, who directed attention to the derelict condition of a portion of the Wrightington Estate. The area consisted of 300 acres, which had been allowed to run wild for about twenty years in order to serve as a fox covert, and was overgrown with hawthorns, elders and clumps of rhododendrons. On this it was proposed to grow potatoes, and the cultivation pursued was as follows: It was first deeply ploughed instead of being skimmed with a three-furrow plough as was suggested. The deep ploughing completely covered the rough herbage and greatly assisted drainage, and then the land being left during the winter became friable in the spring, when it was disc cultivated, twice tine cultivated, and once more disc cultivated with harrows attached. The only manure employed was $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of sulphate of ammonia, $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. of superphosphate, and 3cwt. of flue dust. Half of the potatoes produced an excellent crop, and the remainder were injured by birds, etc. In addition there were 200 acres of poor pasture, which was first ploughed with a three-furrow plough and disc-ploughed with a tractor, drilled, harrowed and rolled by horses. It was dressed with $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of sulphate of ammonia and $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of superphosphate per acre, producing a crop of good oats.

SOLDIERS in the course of the war have invented a considerable number of new words which, though at present regarded as slang, may possibly become English by the lapse of time. One of the latest is “winkled.” In a letter from one of the most celebrated of the Generals under Haig, we were permitted to see the other day his use of the term: “We are winking them out.” The idea is not very different from that of Joffre, who at an early stage of the war said he was nibbling at them. To winkle them out means to get them out as one gets a wrinkle out of its shell by the use of a pin or needle. It seems to be most aptly applied to the destruction of machine gunners. Both the French and

our own troops have become experts in the art of winking these enemies out of their pill-boxes. The word wrinkle in sound rather resembles wangle, but the meaning is very different. It is said that each generation makes its own slang, and a man knows that he is getting old when the dialect of his juniors becomes difficult to comprehend. But if this is so in ordinary times, it is doubly true in these years of war when our soldiers who every moment are dealing with hard facts make the most inspired efforts to find the right word for describing a new operation.

A SPECIAL significance belongs to the observance on September 25th of Italy's Day for, apart altogether from the magnificent work done by the Italian Red Cross with its sixty field hospitals, its mountain ambulances and the rest, it is to Italy that we look for the beginnings of Red Cross work. It was during the Siege of Messina in 1848 that Dr. Palasciano by his insistence that a wounded man may no longer be counted an enemy set a precedent which has led to the universal recognition of the sanctity of the Red Cross flag, though even this emblem, like most else, has been outraged by the Hun. The appeal which is to be made on September 25th is of the sort that should need no urging. Funds are needed and needed badly, and must be forthcoming if the Society is to keep abreast of the claims upon its resources; we hope that the old bonds between Britain and Italy may be strengthened yet further by the response of the British public on Italy's Day.

TO A VAGRANT SOUL.

(With a little canvas case for her shoe-brushes.)

'Twas but a week ago our souls

On Ariel's wings sought sea and heather:

To-day on paved streets and besmirched

Your dainty soles—this time of leather—

Leave pretty prints, too soon forgot,

By sordid crowds who need them not.

Now, here's a small receptacle,

To boots and shoes and such pertaining:

We'll call it, say, a Talisman,

And dusty days or days of raining,

Glacé or calf-kid—black or tan—

Your foot-wear shall be spick and span.

And note this comfortable thought

That every Oracle confesses:

There's not a man who walks this earth

But he, three soles (souls), of sorts, possesses:

Two earth-bound captives—leather-shod—

One vagrant as the winds of God.

ELIZABETH KIRK.

A PROPOSAL is now in the air that all eggs should be sold by weight, and it is giving rise to a great amount of discussion. Most of us consider the egg as a necessary article of diet, and the present method of selling by the dozen or score and charging the same high price whether the eggs are large or small is unsatisfactory. New laid eggs are costing at present from five shillings to five shillings and sixpence a dozen, and the price is almost prohibitive, so that some control would appear on the surface to be called for. Poultry keepers, however, raise the objection that the cost of feeding is prohibitive and, as a matter of fact, a great many have given up. This the Government tacitly admits by proposing a scheme for importing eggs from the United States of America and from Canada. This would not appear to be a very economic proceeding, as an increased number could easily be gained by facilitating the purchase of feeding stuffs here. In regard to selling by gross weight, the chief consideration is that poultry farmers are much tempted to sell only the small eggs produced by young pullets and when the birds come to be two years old sell them as chickens. Therefore to fix the controlled price on gross weight would lead to deterioration. Much more can be said in favour of the system of putting a maximum price on various grades of eggs: so much for those weighing one and a half ounces, so much less for those weighing one and a quarter ounces only, and less still for such as must be called small eggs. The composition of the egg would well repay further investigation. Have the consumers ground for their faith when they prefer the comparatively small egg of the Speckled Sussex to the relatively large one of the Black Minorca? Does the difference between the shop egg and the home egg arise from delay in marketing or from feeding?



THE HARVEST HOME, 1918.

We are indebted to the proprietors of "Punch" for permission to reproduce this joyous harvest cartoon.)

THE FULNESS THEREOF.

In the careless years of old,
Ere Plenty turned her back,
When the corn, like molten gold,
Lay snug within the stack,
As a custom, wearing thin,
Our formal lips adored,
For the harvest gathered in,
And praised Thy Name, O Lord.

Then the Wings of War brought Dearth,
Stalking from place to place,
And the nations of the earth
Stared Hunger in the face:
But when fear of daily bread
Lacking hung like a sword,
A sword above England's head,
Thy Love failed not, O Lord.

And behold! on bended knee,
As a people roused from sleep,
We give humble thanks to Thee,
Thanks that are real and deep,
For the bounty of the fields,
In harvest safely stored,
For the food Thy Mercy yields,
We praise Thy Name, O Lord.

R. C.

THE NORFOLK SMALL HOLDINGS

HINTS FOR SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENTS.

AT eight o'clock on a late August morning we left King's Lynn after a hurried glance at the Custom House, the Town Hall, and the old merchant houses with their exits to the sea. High clouds scudded across the blue, and the wind had an autumn nip that gave warning of summer's wane. But it was the season of ingathering, the most appropriate for visiting the small-holders. Long had the trip been meditated, for I was well aware of the success and prosperity of the Norfolk County Council scheme, but the delay was fortunate, as it secured the companionship of two friends, than whom none could have been more helpful. One was Mr. D. C. Barnard, who, when the acquisition and establishment of these holdings was going on, was Land Agent for the Norfolk County Council, a position held by him from 1908 to April, 1914, when he was appointed a Small Holdings Commissioner of the Board of Agriculture, a happy recognition of the talent and aptitude he had displayed in this part of East Anglia. Just now his task is that of preparing and arranging the Crown Colonies for ex-Service

men in accordance with the plan sanctioned by Parliament. The other was Dr. W. E. Russell, Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station, who adds to his knowledge of soils and manures an interest as keen as it is well informed in the prosperity of the small-holder and balanced by a recognition of the need to work for increased production all round, so that every good cultivator, to whatever class he may belong, shall have his well-being studied. It may be imagined how keenly the various aspects of the question were discussed in the intervals between one inspection and another.

At the outset a word should be said about what can and what cannot be learned on such a tour. For example, it would not be reasonable to expect these men to disclose their profits. It would be of great use and importance to show by an actual balance sheet the difference between the returns obtained respectively by farming on a large and on a small scale; but the figures are not available. One must judge mainly by observation. The air of prosperity is

unmistakable, and that can only be felt; it is not reducible to figures. On the other hand, rents are paid punctually. The total arrears of rent on March 31st, 1918, amounted only to £68 16s. 5d., and of tenant-right to £34 8s. 5d. On a total income of £30,504 these arrears are trifling in the extreme. No less than 13,875 acres have been acquired by hire or purchase since the passing of the Act of 1908. They are well distributed over the cultivated area among 1,383 tenants. Many of these men, probably a great majority, came from the lowest ranks of labour. One was introduced to me by Mr. Barnard as the man who paid his first half-year's rent all in sixpences. "And it was a job to count them," Mr. Barnard added, with a laugh. I asked the man how he came to be possessed of so many sixpences, and he answered with simple frankness that he used to go out with a swing boat "and I laid by the bits for he." To-day he is a thriving little farmer. Others had been broom makers, and rough at that, and still do a little at their old trade. But I think the most affecting stories were of those who remembered the evil days of agricultural labour. One grizzled giant who is now the lord, or at least the tenant, of ten acres and a man of substance, comparatively speaking, remembered when he had to support a family on nine shillings a week. "And did it meet?" asked Dr. Russell. "Not by that," he replied, holding his hands two feet apart. But to-day he is strong and jolly. Another interesting case was that of a patriarch of seventy-six who has educated himself and likes to fling a polysyllable or two into his conversation. And in spite of his workaday clothes, the stick, and the infirmity that comes with years, he has the air which follows the acquisition of wealth and substance. One of his sons who started in 1908 with ten acres under the Council had just purchased a holding. He came with us across the fields, and delighted all by his self-taught but thorough knowledge of crops and soil. The wheat was not so good as it appeared, he said. There were too many "duds" in the ears, and he took one and showed me the empty husks in it. Of the rich silt, the composition of the skirt as they call the soil adjacent, and of the black land he spoke with the confidence and intimacy of one who had explored its recesses since childhood. Time was when he worked for what in his sesquipedalian way he called the magnificent wage of nine shillings a week. Was his cottage rent free? "Oh, no; two bob a week for that." Did he work on all days? "No; sent home in bad weather." He told of putting eight shillings on the table on pay-night. The wife fell a-crying, and so did he, for how could they do it? There were eight of them, husband and wife and young children, making a shilling a week each to live on. He understood the significance of a heap of timber that had in the process of ploughing or excavation been torn from the bowels of the earth, thus proving that the district had been under forest at one time.

What seemed to interest the small-holders most about the wood was that it burned very freely. Taking them at their word, I set fire to a portion with a match, and it blazed up beautifully. It reminded me of an old story alluded to by Sir Walter Scott and worked up by him into a telling incident in the "Legend of Montrose." The legend associated it with the name of Macdonald of Keppoch. When Macaulay, to whom Scott allotted the adventure, was in England staying at the house of one of the Musgraves there were put on the table six candlesticks which were twice as muckle as the candlesticks in Dunblane Kirk. The Englishman jeered at the Scots laird, saying that he had never seen the like in his own country, upon which the Scotsman replied that he had more and better candlesticks in his castle at home. The dispute ended in a wager which would have broken either party to pay. The method of getting out of it was that the Scottish host, or rather his brother, when the Englishman came to visit him, placed behind every seat a gigantic Highlander completely dressed and armed in the fashion of his country, holding in his right hand a sword with the point turned downwards and in the left a blazing torch made of bog pine. The candlesticks were indisputably more valuable than any fashioned of metal, and so the difficulty was got over with a laugh. The passage in Scott that led me to recall the incident was: "This wood found on the morasses is, so full of turpentine that when split and dried it was frequently used in the Highlands instead of candles."

There is nothing new under the sun, but it was curious to find the East Anglian peasants of the twentieth century using the bog pine in the same manner as the Highland chieftains did in the day of Argyll and Montrose.

An addition to their profits has been made by war prices, but, wherever we went, "if the war would only end" was a

constantly recurring expression. Mr. Barnard chaffed the middle-aged sons of this man about the sorrow they would feel when war prices came to an end, but "We were getting on very nicely before the war" was the simple and sincere reply. Everywhere it was the same. Fathers explained that they were cultivating two holdings, their own and that of the boy at the front. "And I wish he was back," or words to that effect, followed the statement. One or two of the bigger men confessed that they had enough to live on if they retired, but the son at the war had ambitious notions and would like to work on a larger scale. A fine young soldier, who was spending his leave helping his father with the ploughing, looked up in amazement at the question whether he would like to come back to the land. His look as well as his words said he would never think of doing anything else. The men, in fact, have had their ambitions roused and are keen on going forward. It has often been discussed whether the small-holder should own or hire his land. Here the problem is being solved by practical experience. It is much better for a labourer starting on a small holding to hire it. No sooner does he "feel his feet" than he begins to want something larger, and when the chance to do so arrives it is the easiest thing in the world to get rid of one tenancy and take on another, whereas there is always difficulty and the apprehension of loss in disposing of an ownership which is in process of acquisition on the instalment system. A tenancy with that security of tenure which a County Council gives is by far the better arrangement. But I noticed that of the successful men some had already succeeded in acquiring the ownership of land, and others were vigilantly waiting for the opportunity to do so.

In the case of the Norfolk County Council, whatever may happen elsewhere, the relations are very much the same as those between a considerate landlord and his tenantry. One could easily gather as much from the conversations of the men with Mr. Barnard. Not all of them remembered that he had been translated to London, and from force of habit promptly seized the opportunity to make their wants known. One urged the need of a new door for the barn. Another suggested alterations in the cottage. A third dwelt on the need of a straight road to the fields instead of the roundabout one then in use at that particular farm. But almost without exception they mitigated their complaints with the remark, "We can't expect much to be done in war-time, when there is no labour." Others who knew of his promotion remarked, knowingly, that he still would have a say in things and might put in a word for them.

It was all part of the friendly intercourse between agent and tenant when the former is making a round of the estate. Again, it has been argued that a public body would be more cast-iron in its methods than a private owner. But the Council is nothing if not considerate. For example, rents are due on April 6th and October 11th, but three months' grace is allowed, as, if a rigid punctuality were insisted upon, the men might be compelled to sell at a disadvantage. It is the custom of the Council to make a friendly inspection of the holdings once a year, and this the tenants like, as it shows a personal interest in their concerns. The regularity with which the rents have been paid is the best possible testimony to the soundness of the methods.

Another point is of very great importance. A system of small holdings is bound to make for intensive cultivation. The tenant of anything over a hundred acres can muddle on indefinitely without doing his cultivation well; but the man who rents ten acres of even the best land must put his back into securing high production, or he will have to go out. Indifferent cultivation is of no use to the small-holder. The latter has also the advantage of avoiding labour difficulties. He does the main part of the work himself, and frequently, where members of a family are located together, one joins with another for mutual help. In other cases the whole family is called out when work is pressing. For example, on one considerable holding I saw a farmer with his coat off loading corn and stacking it without other help than that of four children, the eldest of whom looked about fourteen years of age. Thus all is profit. It was also a great pleasure to find that on the holding we visited very few changes have occurred since the establishment of the holdings. As they get on the men endeavour to obtain more land, especially grazing land, the necessity of which they did not realise until they became considerable owners of stock. Some have rented other farms, some have bought them, but there is not a shadow of a sign of any of them abandoning the holding because it could not be made to yield a respectable income.

P. A. G.

OUTWITTING THE WILY RAVEN

BY ARTHUR BROOK.

IN bygone days the raven nested in most parts of these islands. Now its home is in the wild places, the mountain solitude and the ocean-washed cliff. Very little is known of its home life, and it is one of the least photographed of all birds. Taking into consideration its limited numbers, the inaccessible positions in which it nests, and last, but by no means least, its extreme cunning, this is not to be wondered at. Birds of prey are my special favourites, and the raven is one of the chief. For six consecutive years I tried to secure a home-life series of photographs of the buzzard before I was successful, but the raven went one better and outwitted me until the seventh year.

The raven nests very early, often having eggs in February. The cold is often intense and snow lies deeply on the hills. Weather does not affect the nesting time of the raven so much as the food supply. The better the supply of food the sooner will it nest. I have seen young ravens on March 5th and their nest was surrounded with snow. From three to seven eggs are laid, but four is the average number. Once I saw a clutch of seven, but six I have found several times. Nowadays the nests are often built on cliffs, and are usually inaccessible without the aid of a rope. During my experience I have found seven tenanted ravens' nests in trees, and these were rather deeper than the ones on cliffs.

Last spring, while searching for a suitable buzzard's nest, I found a raven's nest in a valley where I had never previously seen one. The young birds had been killed a week or so before by some farm lads. This year, on April 2nd, I visited the haunt again and found a nest containing three young ones. It was built upon the bole of a mountain ash tree growing from the cliff side. Behind a mountain ash is a favourite site for a raven's nest, and usually a mountain stream will be in the near vicinity. From a photographic point of view the nest was in by no means an ideal situation; but, a better one not being forthcoming, we decided to make an attempt. On the opposite side of the dingle, in a convenient corner formed by two rocks, we fashioned a

"hide." Sticks, pieces of sacking, moss and rushes were the materials used, and a very natural hiding-place they made. We fixed up a round glass bottle to represent the lens as a finishing touch.

Three days later I visited the shepherds' hut again and we proceeded from there to the scene of action. The two shepherds and myself approached the hiding-place from different directions. Removing my mackintosh and cap I handed these to the younger shepherd, who placed them upon an upright stick. I was soon safely, but by no means comfortably, ensconced in the hiding-place. When all was ready my companions departed, carrying the coat and cap on the stick between them.

It soon became evident to me that my place of concealment was not in a good position. For one thing it was rather too far from the object; it was also situated below the level of the nest; comfort was a minor consideration. It was three hours before I heard or saw anything of the ravens. Then the female came flying up the ravine, croaking as she flew. She settled on a rock about 20yds. from the "hide," and stood there turning her head from side to side, the picture of cunning. The sun was shining on her beautiful glossy plumage, throwing it up in relief against the green and grey background of fern and ivy bedecked rock.

Leaving her perch she flew towards the nest. Trembling with excitement, I prepared to take her photograph; for surely now, if ever, my hopes were going to materialise. Before she reached the nest, however, the male bird croaked a note of warning from the air above and she flew quickly upwards.

Only those who have experienced it can realise my feelings at that moment. I have since come to the conclusion that some person must have passed at that moment. Had the bird's departure been due to knowledge of my presence she would not have ventured near the nest again. An hour and five minutes later the female lit on the same rock again. A patient, trying wait of about ten minutes ensued, and then she flew on to a branch of the tree near her nest. The young birds began to cry lustily when they saw their mother. She



FEEDING THE YOUNG ONES.

The old bird's beak is thrust down the young one's throat.



ON A BRANCH OF THE TREE NEAR HER NEST.

had her pouch full of small pieces of mutton and quickly appeased their hunger. I stayed until the light began to fail and several photographs resulted. During my sojourn the raven cleaned out the nest three times. Once she carried the excrement away in her beak and twice she swallowed it.

After leaving the "hide" I again inspected the situation and thought there might be a remote possibility of building a hiding place on the same side as the nest. It would be a very risky undertaking, for the "hide" would have to be on the extreme edge of the cliff, otherwise a view of the nest could not be obtained. The cliff at this point was fully 80ft. sheer, and one false step would mean certain death. At daybreak on April 9th I was once again *en route* for the raven's nest, loaded with camera, accessories and a stout rope.

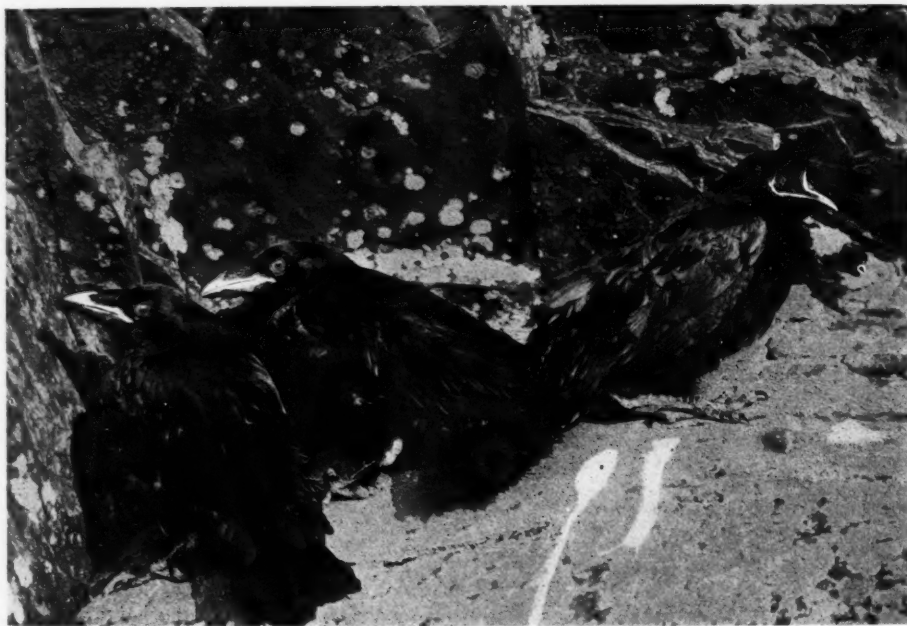
The younger shepherd and I at once proceeded to the nest, which was no great distance from their house. We drove an iron bar into the ground a few yards from the cliff's edge and took turns at digging a hole. The digger had a rope around him when at work in case of a slip, which would be fatal. We had begun working when the older shepherd appeared on the scene.

The sight of us in such a precarious position rather scared him, and it also made him angry. He abused us roundly in Welsh, telling us repeatedly we should be killed and would never make a hole where wished to if we stayed there a month. His advice, needless to say, did not have any effect on us. He went away muttering that he was not going to stay and see us "commit suicide for the sake of an old 'crow.'"

Fortunately

for us the spot chosen was not all solid rock, and we made fairly rapid progress. We dug a hole 3ft. deep and built a wall of turf 1ft. high around it. Over this we placed a number of sticks, interlaced together, covered them with a piece of sacking and then thatched it with rushes and turf. We fixed the glass bottle as a dummy lens and repaired to the shepherds' hut for a meal, well satisfied with our work. A more natural hiding-place it would be impossible to make, and the shepherd opined that I would get the photographs. That evening we made up a dummy man, which we placed inside the "hide." The shepherds were my hosts for the night. At 4 o'clock the following morning the younger shepherd and myself made a start for the nest. I was wearing a hat and coat belonging to the older shepherd. My reason for this was that he passes the nest every day and the ravens are familiar with his attire. As we entered the valley the cock raven left his watch-tower and gave warning to his mate on the nest. She flew croaking down the dingle and joined him in the air above. The female's note is a little less harsh and slightly more prolonged than the male's. They were very angry at our early intrusion upon their domestic affairs, and both came

within easy gunshot, "barking" angrily. The male bird delighted us by "tumbling," as only a raven can. I crept inside the hiding-place, fixed the camera, transferred the shepherd's hat and coat to the dummy man and pushed it outside to my waiting companion. He fastened me in, wished me luck, and carried the dummy away, talking to it in Welsh. Left to myself—though by no means the first time at a raven's nest—



"THE YOUNG RAVENS WHICH CRY."

I began speculating on my chances of success, which did not appear very rosy.

An hour and thirty-five minutes later I saw the shadow of a raven pass across a slab of rock in the field of vision covered by my peep-hole. It was the male bird viewing the situation. He evidently found all was well and croaked to that effect, for a few minutes later the female lit on the tree near her nest. The young ones began calling for food and she flew on to the nest. Her pouch was full of pieces of mutton, which she regurgitated into each beak in its turn. The young ravens' cries reminded me very much of young herons. The inside of a young raven's mouth is of a blood red colour, as though stained by the gory food it dispatches in such large quantities, for it is a voracious eater. It was a fascinating sight watching so wary and uncommon a bird feeding its young. She had not the slightest suspicion that I was near or she would not have ventured to the nest. The young ones were fed at intervals of about fifteen minutes until 11.30 a.m.; from then until 3 p.m. the old raven only visited the nest four times. From 3 o'clock until I left at 6 p.m., fifteen minutes was the average time. Several times after she had appeased her offsprings' hunger the mother raven cooed to them with a note not unlike the wood-pigeon's. One would hardly give the raven credit for possessing such sentiments. I could tell when the female was about to visit the nest by the male bird's note, which signified that all was well. The raven has several distinct calls, including one of warning, one of anger, and one denoting that all is well.

Weather prevented me from visiting the nest during the following week, but on April 23rd I was there once more. The younger shepherd accompanied me from the house, and brought away the dummy man as previously. The ravens were extremely angry, and the male bird, to give vent to his feelings, swooped down at a sheep on the mountain side, missing it only by a few inches. Not content with this, he settled on the sheep's back and gave it five or six sharp digs with his powerful beak. The sheep, scared by such unusual treatment, started off down hill at a smart pace. The raven next turned his attention to a small mountain ash tree and began tearing off leaves, bark and small branches.

The day turned out dull with several heavy showers. The young birds had grown considerably since my last visit, and were ravenous eaters. Fortunately for the ravens, many sheep had died, and within a square mile of the nest there were at least ten carcasses. During the intervals of feeding the young birds exercised their wings vigorously. They stood on the edge of the nest and jumped about, flapping their wings after the manner of young buzzards.



YOUNG RAVENS IN THEIR WILD HOME.



FEEDING A LITTLE ONE AFTER IT HAS LEFT THE NEST FOR EVER.

The following morning I went in hiding at 5 o'clock, having stayed at the shepherds' overnight. I had photographed the raven twice, when it came on to rain heavily, making further photography impossible.

On the last day of April I paid my next visit to the nest. The weather was quite summer-like, with scarcely a breeze stirring. The young ravens were now ready to leave the nest, and I expected them to go at any minute. They stood on the edge of the nest flapping their wings as though about to fly.

The younger shepherd accompanied me as usual, and we took the same precautions as before. The ravens had a busy day catering for three such huge appetites; but, as the old shepherd quaintly remarked, "They have plenty of time." The old birds did not stay at the nest many seconds at a time this day. On several occasions they emptied the contents of their pouches in the nest and left the youngsters to help themselves.

Early the following morning I took up my position in the "hide" for the last time. During the morning one of the young birds flew clumsily from the nest and landed on a broad ledge at the back of the "hide." Taking advantage of the old ravens' absence I quickly removed the camera to that side. A short time afterwards the old bird lit beside its offspring and I took two photographs in rapid succession. This ended, photographically, the last phase in the wily ravens' home life, for the camera could follow it no further into the misty future.

With the raven, might stands for right, and no bird—barring the peregrine—should venture near its nest. Kite, buzzard, carrion crow, jackdaw and kestrel were all treated alike and chased headlong from the vicinity of the nest. Many an aerial battle have I witnessed between buzzard and raven, with the latter invariably as the aggressor.

The raven does very little harm, and will not touch a sheep or lamb while there is life in the animal. It is that Hun among birds, the carrion crow, which is responsible for this for what the raven is often wrongly blamed; but of the former "gentleman" more anon.

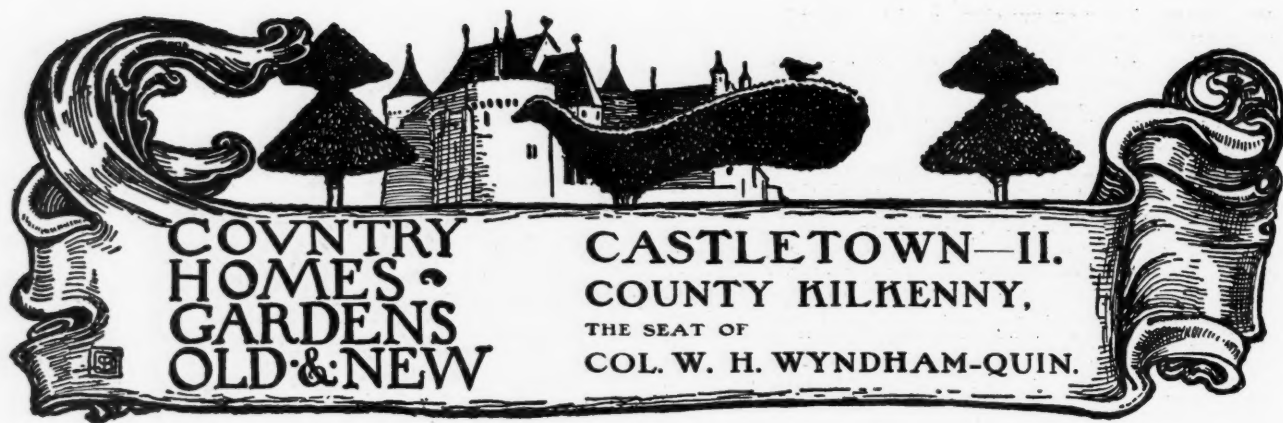
AFFORESTATION

To keep England stocked in wood
Takes some thought, and requires good
Planning quite as much as food.

Fell a tree and set a seed,
This was law when less the need
And as common as a weed.

Now we want a new decree,
So for every forest tree
That is felled, we should set three.

L. E. TAYLOR (Lieutenant).



THE interior planning of Castletown is straightforward and does as much credit to Duchart as the disposition of the main block with reference to the wings. Following good precedents the whole of the garden front is occupied on the principal floor by a suite of three reception rooms, a saloon in the middle, opening out of the pillared entrance hall, and flanked by dining and drawing rooms. The staircase is in a separate hall, cut off from the entrance hall, and shows by the detail of the balusters and by the carefully set out panelling of the walls that Duchart was a man of scholarship. But the chief interest of the interior decoration of Castletown is in the admirable plasterwork.

By extraordinary good fortune it is possible to attribute it to a native craftsman, one Patrick Osborne. Whether he came from Dublin or the nearer Waterford has not been cleared up, but he was obviously as capable an artist as the Franchini who worked at Carton and he showed a greater refinement in his modelling. His detailed account has been preserved and is worth examination in the light of the accompanying illustrations. The Corinthian entablature in the hall and drawing-room cost five shillings a foot, which made £73 10s., and the Corinthian capitals in the hall were £11 7s. 6d. the four. Forty-three festoons in the hall panelling were 16s. 3d. each, and the panel mouldings fourpence a running foot. There are thirteen items for the "Great Stairs," totalling something over a hundred pounds. In the

dining-room the panelling work on the walls with its delicate ornament somewhat in the Adam manner cost £55, the ceiling ornament £34 2s. 6d., and the frieze (which Pat Osborne calls the Ionic Entablature) £23 8s. The saloon ceiling was £45.

An interesting item is "707 feet of wall plastering for paper at threepence." Would that some of the wall paper, not improbably of the fashionable Chinese patterns, had survived. Altogether Mr. Pat Osborne's complete account for the stucco work, duly certified by Mr. John Nowlan, the clerk of works, came to £696 10s. 5d., which was settled in full by His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Cashell by a final payment on August 19th, 1774. An examination of the work suggests that Osborne began in the older tradition of free flowing ornament in the rococo manner and probably became acquainted with the new and more restrained fashion introduced by Robert Adam as the work proceeded. Unfortunately, there is only one complete account, and not a series of separate bills, so there is nothing to show in what order he decorated the rooms. It is likely, however, that the dining-room was the last, for the carver who executed the wooden pilasters between the windows in the saloon worked in an Adam manner wholly unlike the rest of the treatment of the room, and it may well be that he caused Osborne to change his mind as to the plasterwork design of the dining-room. The fireplaces in the chief rooms are admirable of their kind. The saloon mantel is of Siena



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1.—GARDEN SIDE FROM THE SOUTH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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2.—IN THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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3.—PAT OSBORNE'S PLASTERWORK IN SALOON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright.

4.—ON THE STAIRCASE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and statuary marbles and frames a brass grate which seems to be original. The drawing-room had lost its mantelpiece, but it has been replaced by one of the same period formerly in the Angel Hotel, Dublin. This apartment is of distinguished proportions, and the fluted columns of Kilkenny marble have the Corinthian capitals of plaster identified above in Mr. Osborne's account. In the broken pediment of the doorway, opposite the main entrance is a bust of Archbishop Cox. This has been attributed with probability to Scheemaker who carved the tomb to which the Archbishop retired at the age of ninety. His portrait and that of his second wife, Annie O'Brien, attributed to Slaughter, are now in the National Gallery in Dublin.

Perhaps the most interesting of many good pictures at Castletown is a "Marriage" which belongs to the de Bles group, a convenient term by which pictures of the Antwerp School of about 1520 may be described. Despite Berlin's preoccupations with war, Herr Friedlaender has found time to attempt in the "Preussischer Jahrbuch" for 1915, to differentiate the artistic personalities of that group. He has divided them tentatively into groups A, B, C, D and E, and identified group G with one, Jan de Beer. Of de Bles himself, variously spelt Hendrik Bles and Henri de Blesse, little is known, but probably he was born about 1480 and died about 1550. He lived much in Italy, and is said to have decorated with mural paintings a room in the Doges' Palace at Venice. All the pictures of the group (and Mr. Robert C. Witt has in his collection reproductions of about a hundred and fifty) have something mannered about them which has given them the title of "The Antwerp Mannerists of 1520."

It is not for the present writer, no expert in such matters, to suggest into which of Friedlaender's groups the Castletown "Marriage" should be placed. He is rather concerned, in amateurish fashion, to mark the grim way in which the cleric regards the richly bearded bridegroom and the odd proportion which the legs of the turbaned gentleman on the left bear to his total stature. But for all its mannerism the picture is full of gay and attractive incident.

None of the furniture of Archbishop Cox remains at Castletown to mark his occupancy, but the present owners have shown a just



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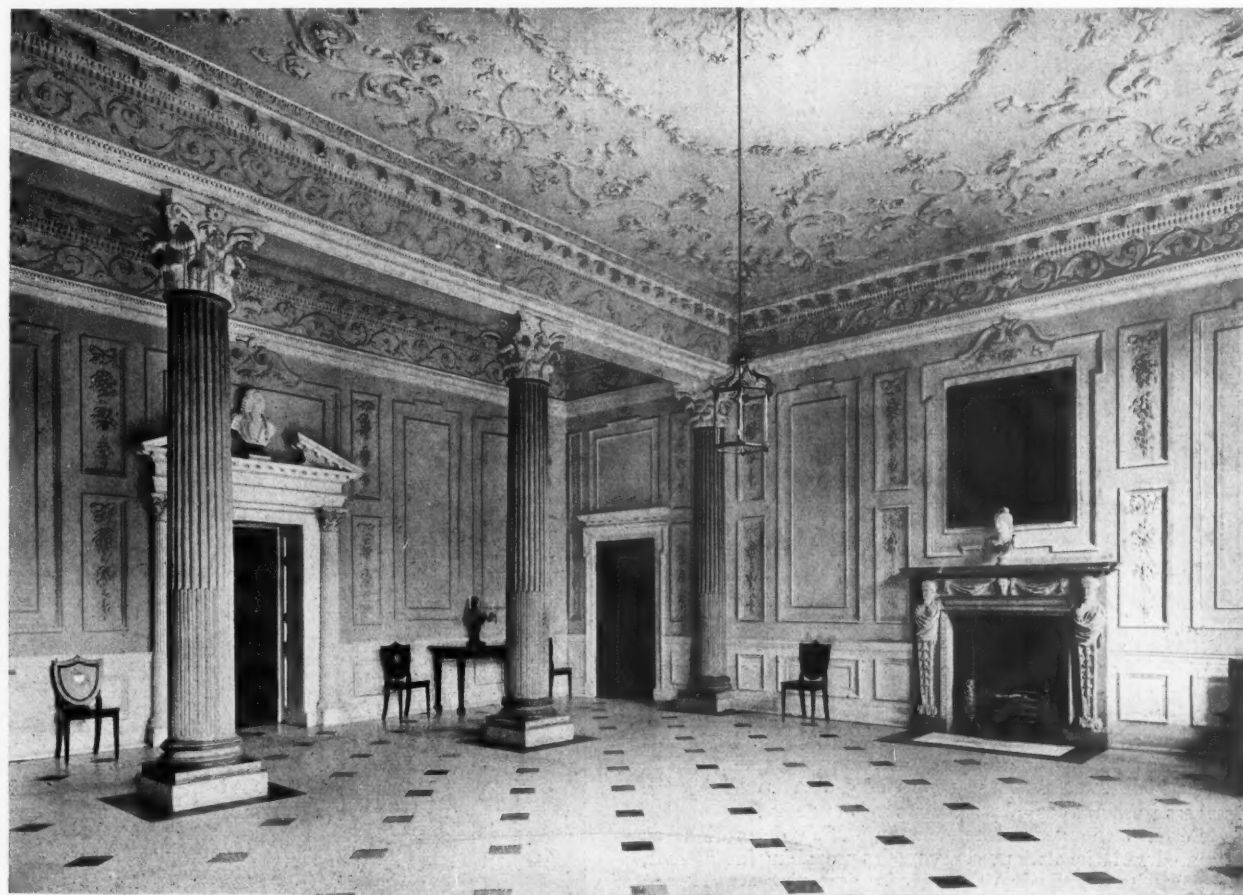
5.—IN THE DINING - ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

taste in garnishing one of the most interesting of Irish Georgian mansions in a fitting way.

The eighteenth century architecture of Ireland is like its furniture in that it owes its general character to the contemporary artists and craftsmen of England, but wears it with

a difference. The building of Castletown can hardly be called typical, for Duchart with his Italian training brought to his work a greater quality of scholarship than is common in the many Georgian mansions which mark the eighteenth century prosperity of Ireland. Some day, perhaps, an Irish



Copyright.

6.—THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

enthusiast in the arts will set down a considered estimate of the contribution of his country to the late classical tradition. Meanwhile it may be said that the country architecture of Ireland is essentially the product of Dublin, which exercised a sway over all Ireland comparable with the influence on France of eighteenth century Paris. A hundred and fifty years ago Dublin was relatively more of a capital city than London. Its architects were Dublin men rather than Irishmen, and their ranks were reinforced freely from London. Gandon's Four Courts were a strong influence all over Ireland; but, even so, the Irish work, especially in such a minor art as plasterwork, developed on somewhat individual lines. When



Copyright.

7.—IN THE SALOON.

"C.L."



Copyright.

8.—HALL FIREPLACE.

"C.L."

the Adam manner crossed St. George's Channel it was embraced with enthusiasm, as is seen even at Castletown, but it took on a local accent.

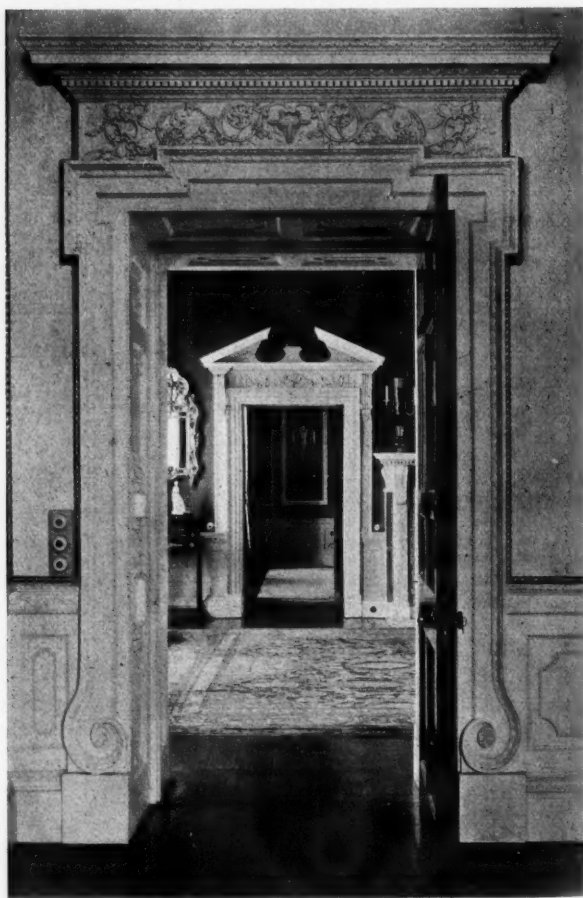
Large as is the quantity of decorations in Dublin houses which owns its sway, there are differences in treatment and in detail which show that the plates of design issued by the Brothers were not copied with any slavish fidelity.

Perhaps the general tendency of Irish decoration, as compared with the contemporary modes prevailing in England, may fairly be described as a greater freedom of treatment, not unnatural in a people of more luxuriant imagination. This is seen by the great popularity of the Franchini, whose work in the saloon at Carton and elsewhere is of a more florid sort



9.—ARCHBISHOP COX'S BUST IN HALL.

than commended itself to the more sober English taste. This is also seen in the decorations of the comparatively few houses of the latter end of the seventeenth century, where the conventions of the age of Wren are handled with a provincial freedom that marks the individual outlook of the local craftsman not greatly fettered by pattern books.



Copyright. 10.—A TYPICAL DOOR FRAME.

"C.L."

The outstanding fact about Irish architecture is that, after the days of its round towers and its development in turn of Celtic and mediæval building with certain differences of its own, the perennially unsettled state of the country and its poverty prevented the development of anything that can be called a native style. By the time a comparatively brief period of prosperity had made possible domestic building on a large scale, the landowners, who alone could afford to build, imported the architectural manner or the architects to do the work. Moreover, Ireland, like Scotland until the end of the eighteenth century, had no lesser domestic architecture of any character or significance, for this can only follow on the settled prosperity of yeoman farmers or the industrial classes, and the absence of serious civil tumult. In no country in the world save England have these favouring conditions obtained during centuries, and consequently no country but England can show thousands of little houses, centuries old and damaged by nothing but the slow assaults of Time and

the housing schemes which are developed in Ireland after the war, whether for the industrial towns or in connection with the settlement of soldiers on the land, some regard will be paid to the reasonable traditions of the eighteenth century. These are as valid in little houses as in big, involving as they do no added expense, but only the choice of a designer with an eye as well as a hand, and they can be expressed in a hill-side cottage as faithfully, if not so obviously, as in Duchart's mansion of Castletown.

IN THE GARDEN

LIFTING THE POTATO CROP.

POTATO disease is attacking the maincrop varieties in all parts of the country. Some of the fields are blackened with disease and the peculiar odour is perceptible from afar. The experienced man knows that as soon as the disease makes its appearance in real earnest the quicker lifting is done the better, so long as the crops sufficiently matured to ensure its keeping afterwards. The tops should be cut off to within 2 ins. or 3 ins. of the ground and taken straight away to the smudge fire. In bad cases of infection it is even better to pull the tops clean away from the roots. This is easily accomplished by standing over each plant and giving a sharp pull, when the haulm comes clean out, leaving the Potatoes in the ground. In all cases the haulm should be burnt as soon as possible. After the tops have been removed much care is necessary in lifting the tubers without damaging them, and this is best done from the side of each row. However, most growers prefer to cut the tops near to the ground, leaving the stalks as an aid to direction when pitching the fork at the time of lifting the crop. Let the fork be thrust in well away from the root and straight down. An experienced lifter seldom pierces a tuber, but many amateurs spoil at least one Potato in ten by careless lifting. As the Potatoes are brought to the light they may either be left on the surface to dry or collected straight away in baskets. Fine weather should be chosen for lifting, and as the tubers are not likely to grow after the haulm has been removed, they should be lifted as soon as weather permits. If the soil is in a fairly dry condition, the tubers, after clearing off the adhesive rough earth by hand, may be placed in baskets as they are dug, separating the chats and "seed" from those to be clamped or stored indoors. The chats are especially valuable this year for pig feeding on account of the shortage of other feeding materials.

Exposure to Light is Injurious.

—If Potatoes are left exposed to light for a day or so, they turn green and distasteful. Where the soil is moist at the time of lifting the tubers may be left to dry on the ground an hour or two—not more. Light must be rigidly excluded or the flavour is spoilt. From the time the tubers are lifted until they are brought into the kitchen for use they must be kept in the dark. The three common storing places are sheds, cellars and clamps. For the clamp a dry, well drained position is essential. There are three common errors in making clamps. The first is they are often sunk too deep into the ground, with the result that the tubers lie and rot in moisture. The second is that they are often made too large, which is equivalent to placing all your eggs in one basket; and the third failing is insufficient covering to keep out frost and rain. The clamp should be on a spot slightly above the level of the surrounding ground. A good layer of dry straw should be placed on the ground, then proceed to build up the Potatoes in the shape of a ridge, dusting each layer of tubers with a light sprinkling of lime or flowers of sulphur to prevent the disease from spreading.

H. C.



II.—DE BLESSE'S PICTURE "A MARRIAGE" AT CASTLETOWN HOUSE.

the quicker and deadlier battery of thoughtless repair and misguided "restoration." In Ireland this lack of a tradition of small vernacular building, combined with the dearth of taste among the governing classes, has brought in its train very unhappy results. When the time came that the tragically low standards of rural habitations brought into being a long-delayed housing policy, there was no standard of national design to which the official architect could be directed even by those who knew his efforts would make hideous, as they have made hideous, the Irish countryside. No doubt financial reasons made it imperative that the severest economy should be exercised, but economy does not demand the ill proportions or base details which are enshrined in the modern Irish cottage. It can only be hoped that in

SETTEES AND SOFAS.—V

IN THE CHINESE TASTE

By PERCY MACQUOID.

SETTEES and sofas as well as other mahogany furniture conformed to the wave of Chinese art which reappeared with fresh developments towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Previous to this the "Indian taste," as it was then called, had been confined to lacquering and painting of contemporary furniture after the manner of the imported Chinese and Japanese "wares" that had obtained such fashionable patronage since the reign of Charles II. The new Chippendale movement, however, showed fresh features in the carved oriental figures, architecture, birds and plants introduced among the ornament in both mahogany and gilt furniture. These motives were generally accompanied by open latticework or other Chinese designs taken from the rosewood open shelved cabinets manufactured by Eastern nations for the display of their china and precious objects.

In the works of Chippendale and his architect friend, Matthias Darly, both published in 1754, many Chinese designs are given, proving this fashion was already well established by that date, and there are frequent allusions to this popular

pseudo-Gothic taste was transformed into the semblance of a Chinese railing.

The legs of this lattice type were often two or three sided and of perforated work, or, when solid, carved with the lattice pattern in low relief. Very occasionally they are found plain in the manner of a straight-legged Chippendale chair, a severe detail that gradually supplanted the hitherto popular and well established cabriole leg. Connoisseurs were doubtless first attracted to this perpendicular leg by the various cabinet stands and stools imported from China.

Among a small and well selected collection of mahogany furniture in the Chinese taste belonging to the Hon. Sidney Greville is the settee (Fig. 1), a remarkable combination of strength and delicacy and which may safely be attributed to the workshops of Thomas Chippendale. The fine curves finishing the uprights of the chair backs, the fat and rich treatment of the pagoda roof crestings, in combination with the unexpected introduction of ovals in the lower half of the tracery, the treatment of the shoe where the pagoda roofing again swirls

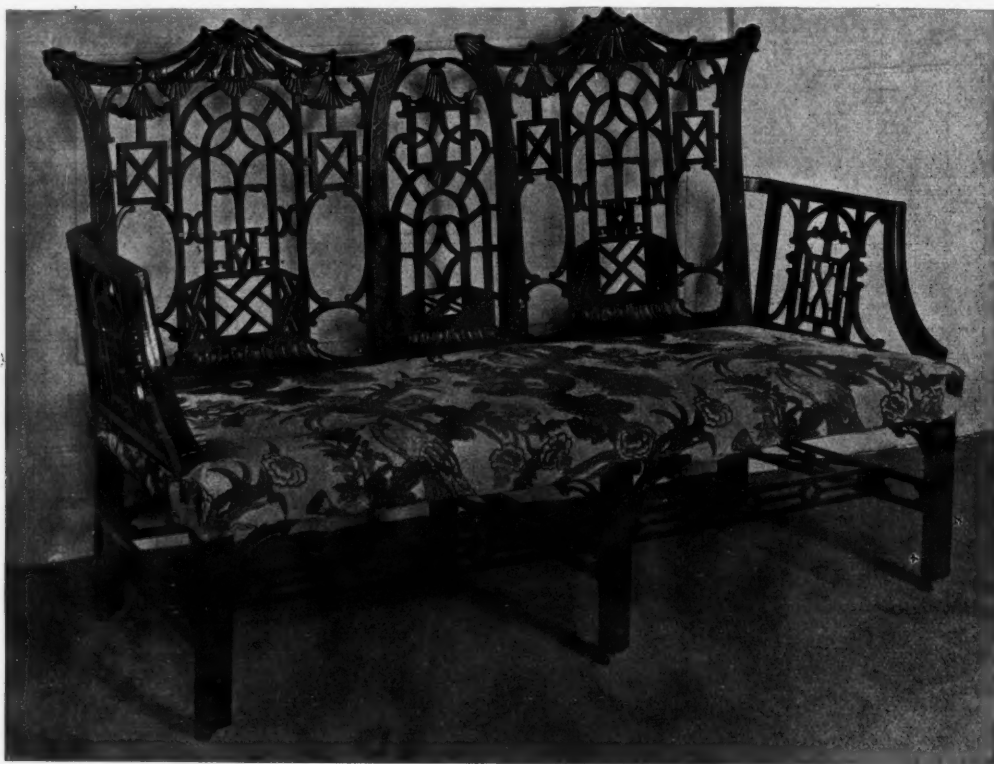


FIG. 1.—MAHOGANY DOUBLE CHAIRBACK SETTEE in Chinese taste, with latticework back, arms and stretchers. The legs are solid with perforated brackets; the seat is upholstered. Probably by Thomas Chippendale; circa 1755. In the Hon. Sidney Greville's Collection.

taste in letters of the time. Mrs. Montagu, writing on changing fashions to the Rev. Mr. Freind from Tunbridge Wells in 1749, says: "Thus has it happened in furniture; sick of Grecian elegance and symmetry, or Gothic grandeur and magnificence, we must all seek the barbarous gaudy goût of the Chinese; and fat headed Pagods and shaking Mandarins bear the prize from the finest works of antiquity, and Apollo and Venus must give way to a fat idol with a scone on his head." There is not space here to dwell further on this movement, nor does its application belong much to the subject of these papers, as the style was more suitable to cabinets, tables, screens and mirrors than to sofas and settees.

However, in such instances where this treatment is found on settees the principal motive consisted of a latticework design, either entirely geometrical or suggesting a pagoda roofed construction. Occasionally small acanthus "flourishes" joined the angles of the Chinese fret, especially where it met the external structure, or a tracery in Chippendale's late

upward to minute latticework panels show how very cleverly these eccentric and, perhaps, not over attractive details have been forced to form an attractive whole. Between the chair backs and under the arms are panels of lattice-work introducing ingenious varieties of the principal motive, and the plain surfaces of legs and uprights are lightened by lattice-work in low relief, the legs being rendered more graceful by elegant perforated bracketing. Stretchers, when introduced on this furniture, were invariably rendered in a Chinese-Gothic perforation, as in the present seat the original covering of such a piece would probably have been of painted silk.

A very favourite method of upholstering this furniture consisted of Chinese silk of light colour water-stained with a design of oriental birds, plants and flowers, executed by both English and Chinese artists; the lack of durability of such coverings explains their unfortunate disappearance, though frequently remnants of this most interesting fabric are found under modern coverings. When the backs were upholstered



FIG. 2.—SINGLE BACK MAHOGANY SETTEE in Chinese taste with pseudo-Gothic motives and plain seat-rail and legs. Circa 1758. In the Hon. Sidney Greville's Collection.



FIG. 3.—SOFA with arms, seat and back upholstered in modern damask. The woodwork shows a strange medley of Chippendale and Chinese treatment of the early Adam style. A rare transitional specimen. Circa 1758, probably by Thomas Chippendale. In the Collection of the Earl of Shaftesbury.



FIG. 4.—MAHOGANY SETTEE in Chinese taste with upholstered arms, back and seat. The latticework carving shows three variants—relief in the solid, open tracery, and the same strengthened with solid backing. Probably by Thomas Chippendale; circa 1756. In the Collection of Lord Leverhulme.

together with the seats the gay effect of bright Chinese colourings must have been remarkable.

Fig. 4 shows an example of an upholstered back. Here the latticework exactly conforms to a well known Chinese arrangement, European motives being confined to small acanthus C scrolls, introduced where the bracketings meet the seat rail; the latter being banded with a charming chain work in low relief. The legs are a good type of openwork treatment, those at each end being two-sided and open, the others being strengthened by a solid backing. Back legs to these settees are generally found plain. The sweep of the arm supports resembles that of an ordinary contemporary chair with the same lattice motive repeated in relief on its face. A large patterned silk of the wrong period destroys the beautiful proportions of the seat. Another interesting specimen of this scarce style in settees is Fig. 2, where again the covering is incorrect. The back of this pretty little seat in no way attempts a double chair effect, but centres in one very broad splat composed of Chinese pagodas and balcony work in outline, the treatment and shape of the framing being slightly hooped and in accordance with an early Chinese moulding; the plain legs with their simple crank brackets are in the same oriental Gothic motive as the arading beneath the arms, often introduced by Chippendale into his Chinese ornament.

It cannot truly be said that this isolated and exotic style helped the settee or sofa forward either in practical comfort or real beauty of construction, and the fashion for it could only have found favour with those who wished to decorate and furnish in the Chinese manner.

Up to 1760 the firm of Chippendale may be said to have dictated style to the English fashionable world. Under his guidance the lines of sofas had gradually become more

undulating and every variety of curve was brought into play. Even Robert Adam, who appeared on the scene in 1758, in spite of all the new detail that he had been accumulating abroad with a view to enforcing a new style, was compelled to conform to the existing taste, and only very gradually put forward the classical features forming the foundation of his schemes.

This admixture of styles produced various eccentricities that can hardly be called transitional, as they departed altogether from the generally accepted fashion of the time. It is certain that the arrival of Robert Adam in London and the early efforts of the new classical style produced a series of tentative attempts in furniture that are rather confusing at first sight. The very exceptional gilt sofas belonging to the Marquess of Zetland, illustrated in "The History of English Furniture," were always considered to be of foreign origin, and it was only when the original designs by Robert Adam, made for Lord Zetland's ancestor, were discovered at the Soane Museum by the present writer, that their English origin was conclusively settled.

The mahogany sofa (Fig. 3) is of the greatest interest, for it possesses three distinct motives in combination: the undulating Chippendale back with touches of rococo carving introduced on the woodwork, the Chinese square legs and feet with openwork brackets, and, finally, the incoming influence of an early Adam compromise between what already existed and what he had learnt from Piranesi, on the frieze of the seat-rail. The latter slightly approximates to the sofas belonging to Lord Zetland, already mentioned, proving that the whole movement was in a transitional state. As all such periods were of necessity short lived, existing examples are limited, but a sufficient number can be found in furniture to prove this evolution.

LITERATURE

A BOOK OF THE WEEK

Memoirs of Sir Andrew Melvill, edited by Torick Ameer-Ali. (The Bodley Head.)

IN the preface of this remarkable book Sir Ian Hamilton draws a very fascinating comparison between the soldier of the seventeenth century as he was pictured by Sir Walter Scott in the famous character of Sir Dugald Dalgetty and as he is revealed in the autobiography of Andrew Melvill. Sir Walter in his gloriously imaginative way pictured the soldier of Forfar set in Scottish landscape, whereas Melvill's story is as simple as the conversation of real life and as vivid as anyone who had been an eye witness could make it. It might have been surmised that the one was the model for the other. Had the novelist not taken pains to inform the world that his knight was a pure creation drawn from his knowledge of life and his wide reading in the literature of the Thirty Years' War and the other great Continental struggles of the period, it would have been concluded that he had taken Sir Andrew Melvill as a model for Dugald. General Hamilton's eye is fixed on his soldier and his participation in the "battles, sieges, fortunes" which raged round the towns destined to be familiar to every reader of the newspaper 300 years later. This feature is well brought out in the illustrations. The frontispiece is a plan of the siege of Ypres in 1648 showing the town and the position of the attacking forces. There are pictures showing Lens in the siege of 1648, Dixmude in the seventeenth century, a plan of the city of Worcester on September 3rd, 1651, when the writer of the memoirs was left for dead on the battlefield which saw the final defeat of Charles. Ypres beleaguered in 1648, the siege of Arras 1654, Armentières in the seventeenth century, Treves 1675, and a map of Hungary conclude the list of illustrations; but if there had not been any war this book would still have been worth reproducing as a human document. It has existed all these years in Germany, and is now translated from the French by Torick Ameer-Ali. Referring to the latter, Sir Ian Hamilton holds it as good—and our readers will readily endorse the opinion—that the young editor of this old memoir who came from the East should show himself so much at home in the European history of the seventeenth century. His words are:

It is reassuring to find a writer who, whilst thoroughly at home amongst our idioms and ideas, is himself a happy fusion of the West with what is best and most progressive in the East. Given time, we shall yet weld the world into one by rebuilding that old Tower of Babel "whose top may reach up into heaven." Only, we must have time.

Of Melvill himself the best that can be said is that he was typical of his kind and time. In the Dictionary of National Biography there is a brief but interesting account of his career. His eighty-two years stretched from 1624 to 1706.

He had been born of a good family. Like Sir Dugald, he was university taught, but ill fortune and troubled times left him with no resource but his good sword, which he carried abroad and wielded for the commander who offered him the best pay. In that he was not wholly mercenary either. His birth and breeding had left in him certain notions of honour that may appear pedantic in our time, but nevertheless raised him above the ordinary soldier. We learn from his own confessions that he fought with the unscrupulousness of the age in which he lived, and that he regarded it as part of his business to glean what profit he could from the battlefield. And he was not unduly troubled with scruples of conscience. About his relations with the fair sex a typical example is touched upon lightly enough by Sir Ian. It occurred that "a fine, tall girl of a lively disposition who sang well" singled him out of a whole group of prisoners and bought him food and drink. The relations between them became intimate and the soldier had promised to marry her, but got out of the bargain when his release was effected. His account is as follows:

I made my preparations to leave with the others, but the girl came and stoutly opposed my going, protesting that I must first keep the promise, which she asserted I had given to marry her. This opposition caused me no little anxiety. My pride revolted against doing what the girl asked of me, but I felt at the same time that I was acting with ingratitude. Nevertheless I stood firm and was set free, one of my friends becoming cautioner for me.

The narrative sheds a clear light on the moving events of the period, and the Editor has bestowed great pains on making a series of cross observations which show that on the whole the writer gave a truthful story. It is lighted up by many lurid scenes, the most distracting of which occurred at the Siege of Serinvar. The forces under the Count d'Holac made a stubborn resistance and the Turks eventually took the town by assault in broad daylight and put the garrison to the sword, but Melvill's contingent got away by one bank of the Raab, while the enemy marched along the other. They had got as far as St. Gothard when the Turks got across the river and cut to pieces those who opposed the passage.

I have never in my wide experience of the many engagements in which I have taken part witnessed such astonishing effects of fear as I saw on this occasion. There were whole regiments of soldiers who allowed their heads to be cut off without stepping out of the ranks, or without making the least effort to defend themselves, to such a degree had terror seized them. They simply cried loudly to the Holy Virgin, imploring her assistance, but evidently the clash of arms prevented her from hearing them.

Sir Andrew was described wittily as a soldier of ill fortune, and he never achieved wealth or fame, but his book well deserves reading as a vivid and lively picture of war. As Sir Ian Hamilton says, fighting does not itself change with time; the change is entirely due to the machinery with which it is carried on.

CORRESPONDENCE

BIRDS AND INSECTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In answer to H. C.'s letter on this subject, in the issue of August 24th, I should like to describe how, in a certain town in the United States, children were successfully interested in the protection of wild birds, particularly in the nesting season. In this town the Commissioners of Schools opened a competition among the boys for making nesting boxes for wild birds. Two prizes were awarded; the first being for the best made nesting box, and the second for the box which secured the first tenant. On February 1st the scholars line up in the street with their nesting boxes, outside the Commissioner's house; the judges inspect the boxes and the first prize is awarded. Then comes the greatest excitement of all, for the boxes are next hung in suitable places in the garden, and the arrival of the first tenant is eagerly awaited. This method of interesting the children in the protection of bird life proved so successful that the city has been known for years as "The City of Song Birds"; and the Society for the Protection of Birds has moved out for want of work. A friend in Ireland has done something of the same kind by turning her garden into a bird sanctuary. The birds in this garden are never touched, and nesting boxes, bought from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Queen Anne's Gate and also from the Selborne Society, are hung in the garden. The birds not only nest in the boxes, but there is considerable competition each spring as to which bird will get which box, some being more popular than others. The sanctuary, of course, is a protection to birds, but it does not teach bird protection to the children. But, if the idea so successfully carried out in one American town could be tried over here, I imagine it would be equally successful.—K. V. TOWNSHEND.

THE TILLERING OF THINLY SOWN WHEAT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Professor Brownjohn's letter and the paragraph in your "Country Notes," in August 24th issue, raised the point of the tillering of thinly sown wheat. It is quite true that a grain of wheat given a space of 22 square yards is able to throw out as many as 42 stems. As regards this experiment being a telling one in favour of thin sowing, I am afraid that numerous experiments during the past few years have pointed out the fact that the practice of thin sowing does not meet with success as regards the production of a paying crop. The patent tillering machine invented by the Rev. E. Sealy attracted considerable attention at the Nottingham R.A.S.E. Show in 1915, but, as nothing is now heard of this, it may be presumed that experience has proved that thin sowing is not successful and that our present rates for sowing wheat, from about 2 bushels per acre for early sowing up to 3 bushels per acre for late sowing, are about the correct quantities for a paying crop. At the same time I think that the general tendency is to sow wheat a little too thickly; whereas, thin sowing promotes excessive tillering, too thick sowing prevents tillering and the plants ultimately produce very small heads and are invariably laid on account of the straw being weakened.—T. E. MILN.

ROLLS PARK, CHIGWELL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The excellently illustrated article in your issue of August 31st on Rolls Park, Chigwell, goes astray on several points. Your contributor states that "the oldest parts of the present structure date from about 1600, and may have been built in the last years of Elizabeth's reign or very early in that of James I. The Harvey family was then in possession, and the father of the celebrated William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, built the house that we now see, or, rather, the older parts of it." This property did not come into the possession of the Harvey family until after 1616 when John Wiseman of Stisted, also in Essex, died possessed of it, and his son Thomas sold it to John Hawkins, and he, or his son of the same name, sold it to Eliab Harvey, fifth son of Thomas Harvey of Folkestone and Hackney, and the younger brother of the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. This Eliab was the first of the Harvey family to settle in Chigwell and it is supposed (see "Essex Archaeological Society's Transactions," Vol. 12, page 133) that the date was 1640. Eliab died in 1661 and was succeeded by his son Sir Eliab, who died in 1698-99, and was followed by his second son William, who was born in 1663, and died October 31st, 1731, and it was probably during his occupancy that the stabling was built, for the weathercock upon this building bears the date 1700 and the initials "W. H." His eldest son William succeeded him, being born on April 20th, 1689, and died December 24th, 1742, and his eldest son, also William, born June 9th, 1714, died June 11th, 1763, followed him; and this William was the father of Sir Eliab Harvey of *Téméraire* fame who was his fourth son and was born at Chigwell on December 5th, 1758, and died there February 20th, 1830. Now the first William—1663-1731—was probably the builder of the main portion of the house, and is most likely the man depicted in the family group in the Music Room. It is certain that this group does not include Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey, for it is signed by Sir Godfrey Kneller and dated 1721, thirty-seven years before the *Téméraire* was born, and, as Mr. Johnston shows, this picture is incorporated in the walls and forms part of the general decorative scheme and was therefore probably contemporary with the building itself. Mr. Wykeham Chancellor, F.R.I.B.A., the writer of the article in the "Essex Archaeological Society's Transactions" referred to, says

this Music Room is part of the early Georgian house and that the later remodelling Mr. Johnston assigns to 1770 really took place in 1778 as evidenced by the family MSS. of Harvey's neighbour, George Scott of Woolston Hall, when the dining-room and orangery at the west end of the house and the rooms over were added. I am delighted that this fine old house has found a place in your series, and hope that in the near future many other of our splendid Essex halls may be added to the list.—STEPHEN J. BARNS.

[We forwarded the above letter to our contributor, who replied as follows: "The house at Rolls Park was evidently not built, as I was led to suppose from particulars given me on the spot, by William Harvey's father; but, nevertheless, the date I suggest for its building, or rebuilding, viz., c. 1600, holds good in architectural evidence. It seems likely that John Wiseman of Stisted, who, as your correspondent Mr. Barnes tells us, died in 1616, built the earlier parts of the existing house. Thomas Harvey's fifth son, Eliab, was therefore the first of the line to occupy the house in about 1640. The character of the stables is consistent with a date between 1685 and 1700, and the date on the weathercock being the latter year, possibly gives us the actual date. My own approximate date, 'seventeenth century' is therefore sufficiently accurate. The weathercock may, of course, have been added later. I judged the date from the character of the internal brickwork. My approximate date—1660-90—for the grand staircase may be narrowed down to c. 1690. But the fact of Kneller's family group, dated 1721, being framed into the wall of the Music Room does not appear to me to decide the actual date of the remodelling which produced that noble apartment, any more than the earlier portraits that are similarly built into the walls. The character of the architectural ornaments in modelled plaster and woodwork is more consistent with the date 1778 (my approximate date was 1770) than with 1721. Moreover, the identical enrichments of the doors and dado in this room are repeated in the dining and drawing rooms, etc., which are assigned to 1778. I entirely accept Mr. Barnes' correction as to the famous Admiral's identity with the 'bright, alert little boy' in the group. My statement was based upon information given me on the spot; and it is only right to state that proofs of the article were submitted both to the present occupiers and to Sir Francis Lloyd, by whom certain corrections were made, and to whom, as well as to Mr. Barnes, I wish to express my thanks."—Ed.]

A RECORD PRICE FOR A COW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Perhaps your many readers interested in farming may like to see



GOLF (IMPORTED) SILTSKE 10th, SOLD FOR 4,500 GUINEAS.

this picture of a Holstein Friesian cow, which last week sold for the record price of 4,500 guineas.—P.

A RHYME OF THE MONTHS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a copy of the rhyme mentioned by C. E. Thorpe in your issue of August 31st. The lines quoted seemed familiar to me, but I did not remember the others, so I wrote to my sister who sent me the full set, with the name of the authoress. I fear we may have to cut down the "Blazing Fires" this Christmas.—FRANCIS GODLEE.

[The version kindly sent by our correspondent is similar to that printed in these pages in our last issue. Copies have also been received from Mabel Porter, H. S. P. Baker, Miss Elizabeth White, A. Evans, S. E. G. (Buntingford), Anonymous (Bath), Miss S. Brooks, Mrs. Kathleen Knight, Sir Henry Bellingham, J. Mitchell Craig, "Land-Worker," W. A. Packman, Miss E. M. Hasluck, J. Thomson, Edith Tyndall, Dorothy R. Harrison, G. Stratton, L. Hobbs, F. M. T., Anonymous (North Lonsdale Club), E. Bass, "Alison," Edmund Street, "A Constant Reader" (Leyton); George Mansell who learned it from Walsingham's "Arithmetic," and E. M. Abraham, who gives a new version of the last couplet but one:

"Dull November brings the fog
Home we bring the Christmas log."

—Ed.]

BRER RABBIT'S WHITE PATCH.

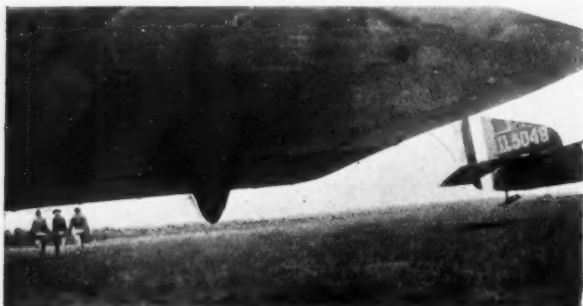
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reply to A. M. Hughes' letter in your paper of June 15th, in which he asked if anyone could supply the information why a tamed wild rabbit he possessed had a white mark on its forehead, I forward this extract from Major Fisher's "Outdoor Life in England," which I happen to have at hand. "Some years ago a labourer whom I occasionally employed as a hedger, brought a live leveret to me, stating that it was one of three which had been born outside his garden, and informed me that whenever three were produced at a birth they invariably had a white mark on foreheads. I was somewhat sceptical as to the truth of this latter statement, but have since ascertained that some naturalists assert it to be a fact." Although this is a case of young hares and not young rabbits, I think that probably rabbits might be marked in the same way.—ROBERT PURSE.

A SWARM OF BEES ON AN AEROPLANE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—All ranks on our aerodrome were greatly amused at a most unusual occurrence some weeks ago. A swarm of bees from some neighbouring hives



THE SWARM HANGING FROM ONE OF THE PLANES.

flew round the aerodrome and eventually settled under the plane of one of the "buses." The swarm, which was a big one, caused much excitement among the "ackemunas," and looked very queer as it hung down from the plane. Need I add that the 'bus was temporarily "out of commission." The bees were eventually boxed and sent off by rail.—E. C. BRADSHAW.

SWALLOWS FORSAKING NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The coincidence of swallows refraining from using the nesting sites on a house in which a death is going to take place is a very frequent one. They built under the eaves of my old home for thirty years before 1900—the year my father died—but did not build there that year nor in 1901, when my mother died; and nested regularly again after that date for many years. Of course, merely coincidence, but curious!—R. S. B.

A PRETTY POSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The group shown in the accompanying photograph was not posed or arranged in any way. I discovered the two children and a six-weeks-old



TAKING A REST.

calf enjoying a siesta in the meadow one afternoon, and the grouping seemed sufficiently quaint to be worth putting on record.—H. L. JACOB.

THE "JUGGING" OF PARTRIDGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can any of your readers tell me the proper word to use when speaking of partridges sleeping or passing the night on the ground. Here, in Sussex, old keepers and others will speak of seeing where partridges "jugged" last night, or words to that effect. At all events, the verb is to "jug" in these parts and not to "roost," as a Cockney might term it. I was amused the other day by a small boy in the train turning to his mother and asking if cows slept in trees. He was very small and it was almost the first glimpse he had seen of the country, and he was genuinely thirsting for knowledge. He thought the

tiny wee cows (in the distance) quite a different kind to the great big ones near the train.—EDWARD G. KING.

[The game-keepers of Sussex have authority for this use of the word "jug" or "jugg," which goes back to the seventeenth century. The noun stands for the place where partridges sleep; the verb is used for their crowding or nestling together.—ED.]

FROM THE PERSIAN OIL FIELDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It will be remembered that the despatch of our first Expeditionary Force to Mesopotamia in November, 1914, was in compliance with a minute



STABLES OF THE ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY.

of General Sir Edmond Barrow, then Military Secretary at the India Office, for the purpose of protecting the oil fields at Tembi. Subsequent events have carried us far afield throughout the Valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, but still we hold our original objective in this out of the way corner of the Muhammareh feudatory Viliyat of Persia. Ahwaz on the Karun is, for most purposes, the river head on the line from the Oil Refinery at Abadan on the Shat-el-Arab near Busra to Tembi; and so from Ahwaz to the oil fields, a distance of seventy-eight miles, the greater part of the traffic is by means of buck-wagons drawn by mules, though the actual oil passes by gravitation through pipe lines. It is not permissible to publish photographs of the fields, or to state their output; but there can be no objection to your readers seeing the interesting form of stables built by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for the accommodation of their animal transport, and still less to a picture of the Persians employed making bricks for their construction,



PERSIANS MAKING BRICKS.

by methods and according to a style of architecture in vogue since the days when the Median-Persian Empire was the hub of the universe.—GODFREY PEARSE.

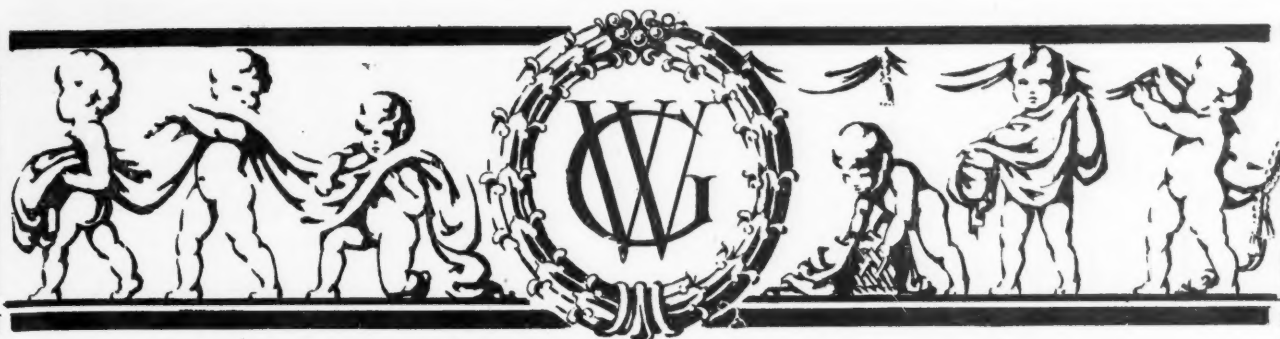
A MILKING STAND FOR A GOAT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Herewith I enclose for your inspection a photograph of a milking stand, upon which a goat is accustomed to stand to be milked. It is being used daily in this neighbourhood.—CONSTANCE HAYNES.



NANNY ON HER MILKING STAND.



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DETAILS were recently announced of a new Government table of maximum prices for wheat, rye, barley and oats per quarter, and as it is a matter which, especially as regards oats, affects all breeders and users of horses, I propose making some comment on what really amounts to a decisive victory for the producers—the farmers. Hitherto one has heard “bleats” innumerable from agriculturists in consequence of Government control and administration of their industry, in the regulation of prices, and the direction and expansion of their operations, both as regards the raising of cereals and of live-stock. They have felt that the Board of Agriculture was not fairly representing the difficulties of their position, especially where the steady rise in the cost of production was concerned. But in this latest instance of Government policy as shown by the War Cabinet's new table of rates one must credit Mr. Prothero, the President of the Board, with having fought on the side of the farmers and, moreover, with having been on the winning side, for unquestionably the most recent developments are a score for the farmer.

You must recollect that up to the present he has had to sell his oats at 44s. a quarter, which was the maximum price. Of course, somebody—the middleman, I suppose, as usual—was making a big profit, for every owner of a horse knows of the tremendous difficulty he has experienced in obtaining oats even at any price. Quite a number of breeders and trainers of race-horses have declared to me that they were at their wits' end to know where to get oats. They would willingly give up to 70s. a quarter. Really, therefore, the Government were “cornering” oats in a way which was most unjust both to the producer and consumer. Now let us see what happened at a recent conference between the Government and an influential committee of farmers, the outcome of which was the new table of rates referred to. The latter asked for 50s. a quarter for their oats, and they may be said, practically, to have had their demand granted. Although the advance starts at 47s. 6d., it is only for this month. Well, one may say that no oats are threshed in September, and the price may therefore be said to start at 48s.—the sum fixed for October—until it reaches 52s. in June. It thus averages 50s.

Beyond all question the new figures meet the cost of production while also leaving a fair profit; but now another important point arises. At 50s. a quarter oats are the cheapest food a farmer can use on his farm, and he will want to keep them back for the feeding of his stock. As we know, they are certainly the “safest” among cereal foods for horses, milking cows, young stock, ewes and lambs. At 50s. a quarter they work out at £16 13s. 4d. a ton. I suppose that cotton cake is the cheapest artificial feed (if you can get it now, which you cannot!), and it is priced at something like £16 10s. to £17 a ton. It has not the same feeding value as a ton of oats, and, moreover, is not by any means a safe food for young stock or sheep. Linseed cake is scarcely obtainable at £22 a ton, while maize is over £30 a ton. Is it likely, therefore, a farmer is going to part with his oats, especially as the price of foreign oats works out at nearly 70s. a quarter? It is legal now for the dealer to take a profit of 1s. a quarter if resold within seven days. Above that, however, he can make rail charges and other expenses which put quite another colour on the transaction.

Then as regards wheat and barley. Wheat, of course, is the food of the people, and patriotic farmers ought to be satisfied with the new rates, ranging from 75s. 6d. to 76s. 6d. per quarter of 504lb. They asked 70s. a quarter for barley and were given 67s. plus 1s. a quarter where the grain is carried without railway transport. The official table issued to the Press last week shows the new rates. I am able to say what the farmers demanded and the comparisons afforded are really the chief point of interest. During the discussions, Mr. Prothero succeeded in getting 8lb. a quarter off the usual standard weight, and that concession is equivalent to another 1s. for the farmers. Then 440lb. was named as the standard weight, which has always been 448lb., and the farmers accepted it. But whether that was a slip which will be rectified later remains to be seen. At present the farmers are reckoning on the quarter being 440lb. for barley.

Arising out of this, and assuming I am correct in suggesting that the farmers will not want to sell their oats even at the new rates, what about the feeding of rationed racehorses and blood-stock generally, also the underfed and over-worked horses in the large cities and towns? Are they going to suffer? Assuredly

they will do so unless farmers can be made to part with a proportion of their oats. One thinks of impressment, and yet the idea is surely too remote and impossible. What, then, is the solution? In my opinion it would come about by “lifting” the Government control. Do away with control and oats would at once come into the open market to make what their current value was, and the owner who is entitled to feed his horse or horses on cereals would make sure of obtaining at least his share. After all, a very small proportion of oats go for human consumption. Beans and peas are not controlled. Why not leave oats alone?

Next week I am looking forward to commenting on an important week's events at Newmarket—four days of racing and five days of yearling sales. The latter in pre-war times were held in the same week of the year at Doncaster, and they are, therefore, quite the outstanding incident of their kind. It is due to the necessity of going “early to bed” with the weekly issue of this paper that I am compelled to write now on the eve of the racing and sales referred to. A week hence, however, it will be known exactly how easily Gainsborough won the September Stakes—assuming he was not beaten!—and what prices were realised by the Sledmere and other yearlings. Among the “other” yearlings are those which were offered for sale by the National Stud, that establishment at Kildare in Ireland, which was part of Colonel W. Hall Walker's gift to the nation. A year ago one recalls that the young stock made big money at Newmarket, especially a colt by Tracery from a mare named Countess Zia. He came to be named The Panther, and as a two year old in 1918 he is already a winner of high class. Countess Zia has a yearling in 1919 by Royal Realm, and it was one of those to be offered. But there is a wide difference between Tracery and Royal Realm. The one was a classic winner which went to the stud at a three or four hundred guinea fee. Royal Realm had by no means the same credentials, and for that reason his stock does not possess the same value. The success of a stud must depend on the success of the sire or sires, and, in a lesser degree, on the mares. The National Stud has White Eagle, Royal Realm, and Great Sport, and, though each has distinct possibilities, they are not in the same class as sires as Polymelus, Sunstar, Tracery, The Tetrarch, Gay Crusader, and Roi Herode. For that reason the National Stud cannot very well look forward to competing in the front rank and making certain of large four-figure prices for the yearlings bred under its auspices.

The fact makes one wonder as to its future, and in this connection it will be a matter for decision after the war as to what policy shall be adopted by the Board of Agriculture on behalf of the Government both as regards the National Stud and the Russley Park establishment in Wiltshire, the latter at present being carried on as a Remount Depot. It follows that if a stud in Ireland is to compete with privately controlled establishments it will have to bring its stock-in-trade up to date by the investment of capital in the highest class of stallions and mares. For only by doing so can it hope to justify its national ownership. It may be, of course, that the authorities have other ideas in view. To breed high-class racehorses need not necessarily be the primary object. A practical, if somewhat less romantic, ideal would be to breed thoroughbred sires which could be drafted to a centre like Russley and be employed in siring half-bred and three-quarter bred stock in the interests of national light horse breeding generally.

PHILLIPPOS.

L'AUBERGISTE DE BOULOGNE.

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Ote un écu au médecin?

Que voulez-vous? J'en ai toute sorte
De Xérés sec, de Cognac fort:

Vins de Bordeaux et de Guyenne,
Le Cheval blanc et le Chasse-Spleen,

Pour nos “Poilus,” pour nos amis
Les chers “Tommies” et les “Sammies.”

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Des Aubergistes le Roi, voilà!
Un p'tit Saint-Paul, il prêche, tout vrai,
Foi, Espérance et Charité.

H. P.